3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

into paste. Then, using a finger, she daubs the fresh cloth, which may be white, fawn, brown, or blue, with bright splotches of red. If she is using the fruit juice she carefully collects it in a cup made from the hard shell of some forest fruit, and with little twigs she draws fanciful patterns of straight lines, crisscrossing the cloth with unconventional Pygmy geometry. When the cloth is finished she throws it over the roof of her hut to dry, and looks around for something else to do.

Women usually work in twos or threes for company, and nearby a friend will be attending to some other womanly task. They spend hours at a time making the elaborate belts which hold the bark cloth in place. The material culture of the BaMbuti is minimal, and simplicity and utility are usually the main characteristics. But there is nothing simple about the belts they make. A single belt takes several weeks. First the vine has to be collected, dried, and shredded. Then the strands are tied around a stout twig in the ground. The woman holds the stick firmly between her toes and pulls a number of the strands to form the core around which she braids an outer binding. There may be as many as two hundred braided lengths to a single belt, bound decoratively in the center. Each end is worked into ties for fastening the belt tightly so that it will not only hold the bark cloth in place but also support knives, machettis, and the bundles of roots and other things that Pygmies tie to their belts while on the trail, to leave their hands and arms free.

The same vine, nkusa, is used for making hunting nets. After it has been shredded it is deftly rolled on the thigh, one strand being rolled into the end of the next so that when two strands are twined together a woman can present her husband with a length of stout cord long enough to add several feet to the family hunting net. Netmaking is virtually a full-time occupation, and one in which both men and women indulge whenever they have both the spare time and the inclination. Few occupations are strictly reserved for either men or